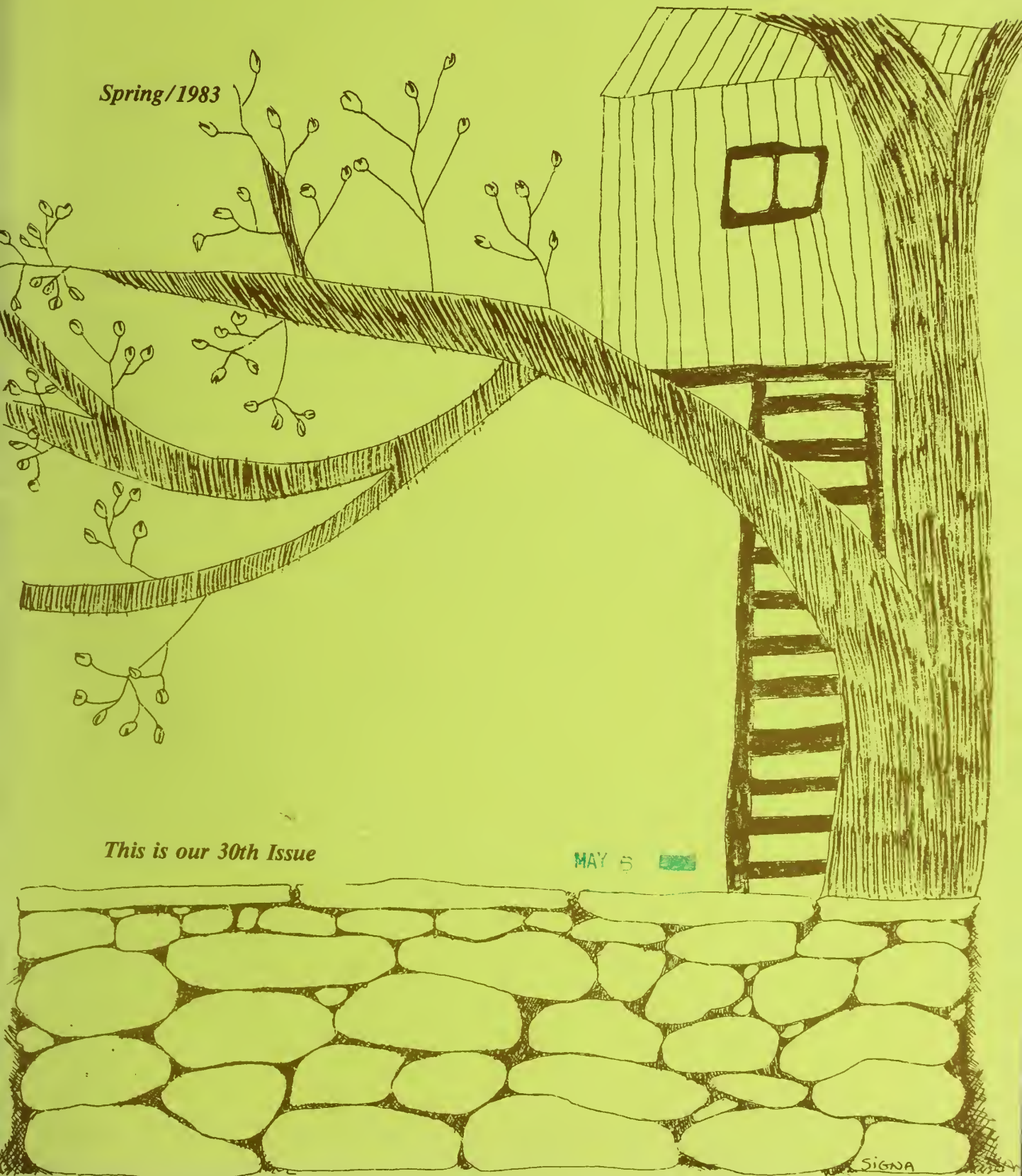


STONE WALLS

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This is our 30th Issue

MAY 5

SIGNA

Now that the Christmas season has passed we are entering the mid-winter slump, bringing relaxation and a release from holiday pressure. The winter seems to stretch far ahead into the distance with plenty of time for all the projects we've saved up or put off --probably an illusion.

This so-called slump has given me a new burst of energy. In the past ten days I have made a batch of mincemeat, started a new afghan, swept out the garage, cleaned up the cellar, and today we reorganized the freezers at long last. The Christmas tree conveniently keeled over the other afternoon, relieving us of the decision of whether to leave it up a little longer. Next on my list is a batch of cranberry marmalade to try from a recipe that caught my eye, and then a down quilt to be assembled from a kit. We'd like to accomplish that before spring for obvious reasons! No, the thank you's are mostly still unwritten, the house needs a good cleaning, so the laziness shows. Luckily there are still holiday leftovers to eat, including turkey and eventually turkey soup. But at present there is nothing that has to be done, no deadlines, a wonderful feeling. There will be lots of time for sewing and reading. My husband has plans for his winter leisure too - a new kitchen cupboard, closing in the sides of the machinery shed, a drawing class at U. Mass. He even cleaned out his desk the other day, a long postponed and major chore.

All too soon the illusion will merge with reality. There really isn't all that time. Sooner or later there will be snow to plow, extra wood to bring in for colder weather, and preparations for spring - trees to order, seeds to start indoors, and I hate to mention this, the income tax to figure! By the time you read this we will probably be thoroughly tired of winter and longing for spring to appear, with its added joys and work load for us hilltowners.

Louise Mason

Louise Mason

1/5/83

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Middlefield's Centennial

1883

When the town of Middlefield was incorporated in 1783, about fifty families were living in the area. Settlement was rapid and by 1800 the town had reached its peak in population. During the mid 1800's, the coming of the railroad and the woolen mills along Factory Brook brought many changes to Middlefield. In 1883, the town held its centennial celebration described as follows in *The History of the Town of Middlefield Massachusetts* by Edward Church Smith and Philip Mack Smith.

When the year of 1883 arrived the Middlefield people realized that their town had been in existence for one hundred years, thus acquiring a certain historical interest. At this date many of the prominent sons and daughters of the town were still alive, living for the most part on the farms which had been handed down by their fathers and grandfathers. In the memories of the older residents the recollections of the pioneers were still

fresh. It was therefore decided to hold a centennial celebration. As the actual date of the incorporation fell on the twelfth of March, - a most unfavorable season of the year, - the festivities were postponed to August 15. The Committee of Arrangements consisted of M.J. Smith, Matthew Smith, Charles Wright, Hiram Taylor and George S. Bell. The same meeting also appointed as president of the day, Metcalf J. Smith, as chief marshal, Arnold Pease, and organized the town into one vast committee on supplies for the collation, while special committees attended to the other details. Professor Edward P. Smith of Worcester was invited to deliver the historical discourse; several persons, mostly former residents of Middlefield and representatives from adjoining towns which originally contributed of their territory to help form the new town, were invited to speak on special topics and Myron L. Church was appointed to provide suitable music. A tent capable of holding twenty-five hundred persons was procured and pitched on the summit of the Fair Grounds, a point from which nearly the whole of Middlefield can be seen, as well as all the surrounding towns.



The people of the town entered heartily and generously into the spirit of the occasion and, the day being perfect, the success of the celebration was complete. The attendance was large, and included very many, though too few, of the old residents and descendants of the town, and a multitude of friendly visitors from neighboring towns. The president had planned the program so well that everything was done at just the proper moment, and he opened the exercises with a gracious address of welcome. The historical discourse was so full, so interesting and so adequate to the occasion that it was listened to with eagerness. A centennial poem by Azariah Smith reviewed with kindly humor and deep feeling the impression of a youth spent in Middlefield. So great was the interest aroused by these and other addresses that there was a general demand for their publication, which was generously provided for by the town.

The speakers in general seemed to sense the uncertain economic future for the town, and to feel that a distinctive service to its sons and daughters had been rendered by Middlefield in the past which had made its influence reach far beyond the limits of the township. In this vein, the president of the day spoke as follows in his address of welcome:

“We, the dwellers in Middlefield, acknowledge that we have ‘a goodly heritage.’ We remember today that this town is what it is because of the sterling worth and character of the generations that have gone before. We also desire to be impressed with the truth that the Middlefield of the future will be largely what we of the present generation are making it. And, fellow citizens, impressed

with some just sense of our responsibilities to those who shall come after us, be it ours to transmit to our children this goodly heritage, not only unimpaired, but still further enriched by our own manly, Christian living.”

In the Historical Discourse also after describing periods of material achievement and prosperity, the speaker said:

“But in a most important sense the great work of Middlefield has not been either agriculture or manufactures. Her best products, those by which she gains her fairest renown, for which there is an unfailing demand, are her sons and daughters. Nowhere more than in Middlefield has there been a more profound apprehension of the immense difference between getting a living and living. This realization has laid a more constraining grasp upon the subtle springs of action than any questions of profit and loss. Middlefield’s first effort has been to make, not money, but men.”

He testified to the excellent equipment acquired through the training in the schools, in the capacity for self-government developed in the small hill-towns, and of farm life in general, emphasizing Middlefield’s particular service to the country at large in the following words:

“If in the future this town could only be a nursery from which should be transplanted at fitting times the best growths it could produce, it would still do a work of inestimable importance. In this age of steel and electricity, this era of vast opportunity, it is probable the interests of many of Middlefield’s children would be promoted by going forth to other callings than those here

pursued. But for success in these callings nothing can surpass the lessons in cheerful industry, the wise economy of a simple training, the muscle of energy and victory that may be gained here. The departure of such young men is a loss to the town, but a gain to the world, that perhaps needs them even more. In just this way Middlefield has given to the West and to our towns and cities some of the best blessings they have received, - men of industry, business talent, and order, men of education and piety, who, wherever they have gone, have laid the foundations or upheld the structure of all that is hopeful or good."

On the other hand, an objective view of the positive achievements of Middlefield in the pursuits of agriculture was set forth in a letter from the renowned physician, Oscar C. DeWolf, of Chicago, formerly of Chester.

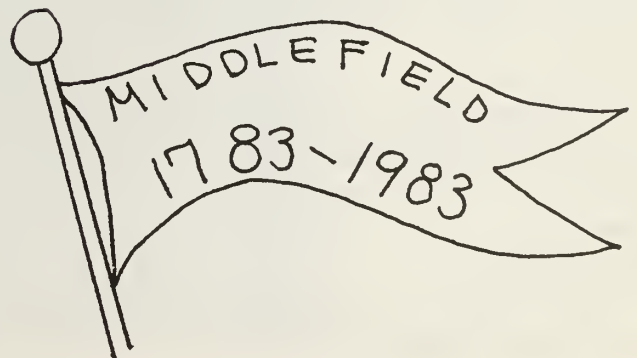
"Middlefield has always kept itself pre-eminent among the neighboring towns by the value of her agricultural interests; and the fact, taking into account her sparse population, that she has so long and so creditably sustained an agricultural society, with an annual exhibition, is sufficient testimony to the intelligence and enterprise of her people.

"Her young men should reflect long before they decide to exchange the independence and healthful occupation of a farmer's life for the uncertainties and wearing excitement of business in our cities."

The appreciation of the advantages of their early training in Middlefield felt by those who had gone forth to acquire a higher education was eloquently voiced by Dr. Judson Smith in the following words:

"It were vain to seek to tell a tithe of the debt that her educated sons and daughters owe to Middlefield, to the homes that gave them birth, to the social life that flowed around them, to the schools where the firm foundations of later attainments were laid, to the churches where honesty and purity and ever manly virtue and Christian grace were reinforced, to the teachers and preachers, to the men and women who inspired them with noble aims and furnished them with true ideals ... Gladly, reverently, as if discharging a sacred service and a personal debt, I weave this chaplet of honor for our native town, and speak for the fathers and mothers, immortal now, these words of love and heartfelt praise."

In the flowery language of a hundred years ago, the speakers at Middlefield's Centennial were recognizing the changes taking place in this small hill town. One hundred years later, in 1983, the people of Middlefield are celebrating their Bicentennial. There are more trees now as the forests have returned, but the Fair Grounds remain and the view is just as spectacular!



From the Diary of Nelson Clark (1861)

Dear folks,

When the Montgomery Historic Book Committee was thinking about our recently published book, *Footprints in Montgomery*, it was old letters, maps, diaries, town records and other documents that got us to feeling that we must get materials of this sort into some printed form so that interested persons and future generations might be able to know something of the early days of the little town.

We have excerpted from the diary of Nelson Clark the material which we are submitting to you--believing it might be of interest. No doubt other persons had a similar life - but he was apparently a hard working man - deeply religious, and interested in all affairs. He was born in Montgomery Sept. 2, 1806. In 1836 he married Louisa Pomeroy of Southampton, and they had three sons and two daughters. He became Montgomery's second Postmaster. As one reads he tells of his carrying mail to Russell - also each Sunday's entry to his diary starts "attended meeting with my family" and prayer meetings

were attended during the week. Wind directions and weather was recorded, and the spelling is, of course, his own--no punctuation in most places. Obviously, the family was poor, yet he bought boots and sent to his boys--all three of which enlisted in the army. The diary did not have the month of January on it. It is for the year 1861--at the top of one page he had written "War Year". You will also note that he recorded various happenings of the war--Once he said he was going to write to Abraham Lincoln--he recorded Lincoln's assassination.

None of this material was included in the book (but I think it should have been). We were not able to locate from any one, any pictures of Nelson, but do have the battered, stained and fragile old diaries which were written in old Post Office Record books.

Sincerely,

May Smith

For the Montgomery Historical Society

Feb. 13, 1861

Went to Russell and brought up a gallon of kerosene Henry carried the mail I feel very tired tonight Henry gone to debating school at the school house weather pleasant thawed some today.

Feb. 16, 1861

at home braiding husks for foot mats. Henry doing errands. weather fine and pleasant Almon come home this evening.

Feb. 23, 1861

come home this afternoon. Brother Lathrop gave me 2 bushel of rye and brot

me and the rye to Sheldon's mill where I exchanged it for flower then brot me and the flower to Mr. Washburns. weather cooled down and began to rain this evening.

Feb. 24, 1861

forenoon chopt at E. Clarks with Henry. Louisa and girls went to E. Clarks today then come up to Elisha's and visited got home at 1/2 past nine o'clock weather fine and pleasant cloudy this evening.

March 2, 1861

Went to Bartholomews and Horace Moores to give Notice now have official

members of the Methodist Church Meet
with Brother---next Monday Henry
gone to Clarks weather warm and
springlike

March 5, 1861

Chopt on Shatterack Henry with
me Louise went to J. Squires to wash
with his wife weather cool and windy.

March 12, 1861

Chopt on Shatterack alone Henry
went to Skiler Clarks last night and was
supposed to come back this morning but
has not come yet 8 o'clock P M Dont
know what has become of him weather
morning cold and sower but warmer and
cloudy this evening

March 22, 1861

at home shoveling snow and chopping
wood by my door. cleared off before
noon wind blew-snow badly drifted-
road impassable

March 23, 1861

Chopt some for myself on Pine Lege
on E. Clarks land Henry with me. Fort
Sumter Evacuated 20 of the present

month. weather fine and pleasant

March 25, 1861

Drew wood from Pine lege today with
James Squires oxen. Elisha drew with his
oxen very kind to me God bless him
for his kindness in many things weather
fine and pleasant

March 30, 1861

At home Henry Tirzah and I made
out the quarterly returns today a good
job done up weather, forenoon rainy
P.M. cleared off quite pleasant

March 31, 1861

Sunday to meeting Henry went to his
summer work today Weather pleasant,
some windy

April 2, 1861

about home doing chores North east
snow storm last night and all day today
drifting as it come

April 3, 1861

Carried mail to Russel bad traveling -
snow 16" deep on a level rather cold
and cloudy looks like some rain tonight



April 6, 1861

Chopt on Shatterack alone sun shone
hot part of the day burned my face.
Tirzah went for papers.

April 9, 1861

At home quite sick took care of my
cow and young creatures Weather
pleasant

April 10, 1861

Unable to carry mail Oseanus Moore
carried it. Weather pleasant.

April 16, 1861

At home doing chores. old cow calved
last night. Chester Braces house burned
last night about midnight no one came to
help him. He had it all to himself. North
east snow storm all day looks winter-
like snow now 6 or 8 inches deep and
melted as it came Snow enough fell to
make 18 inches if it had not melted

April 19, 1861

At home helping to make soap weath-
er pleasant cool

April 20, 1861

Went over to T.B.Averys and Gilbert
Squires to sell my calf did not succeed
and sold him to Dwight Moore for fifty
cents Weather pleasant but cool

April 21, 1861

Attended meeting Brother Barnes
preached acceptably I liked him very
much weather cool and windy this
evening

April 23, 1861

Went to A. W. Knapps and got some
flower, then to O.A. Moores and got
some apples. sowed some beets and
peas weather warm and pleasant thun-
der this evening Great excitement in the
country. War is upon us dont know
what will be the end of it Washington in
danger of being taken by the traitors
hope they will fail

April 28, 1861

Attended meeting Brother Barnes
preached weather cloudy and began to
rain about 2 James Squires wife died
about 4 o'clock this afternoon

April 30, 1861

At home sawing wood and picking
stones off the garden James Squires wife
was buried today weather pleasant but a
rail squall toward night cooler windy
May 2, 1861

Piled wood on Shatterack got quite
tired weather cool and windy ground
froze this morning quite hard War news
plenty

May 11, 1861

Forenoon at home afternoon went to
A.A. Moores to see pigs then come home
and went up to the meeting house to raise
a flag quite a time Ransome ploughed
for me this P.M. plowed garden and
over the brook weather rainy in the
forenoon come off nice with flying clouds
May the 13

planted some early potatoes went to
A.A. Moores and got two pigs paid
\$.50cents each weather cloudy rained
some I hear firing of canon in Springfield
this evening.

May 23, 1861

At home forenoon planted in the
garden afternoon got C. Clarks team to
plow ground Charles and Henry helped
me Weather fine and pleasant

May 23, 1861

Forenoon at home afternoon went to
Town house to training small affair
Weather rained some this morning after-
noon cleared off fine and pleasant.

May 26, 1861

Attended meeting with my family quite
a turnout today Weather pleasant.



May 29, 1861

At home - carried mail to Russell Louisa some unwell today Adeline Barthalamew is married this evening Weather forenoon rainy P.M. cleared of cool

June 1, 1861

Forenoon at home afternoon went to Russell Paper Mill after Almon's wife got back before dark weather very warm hottest this year.

June 5, 1861

Carried mail to Russell weather rather cool with east wind Stevin A. Douglas died Monday the 3 at 9 o'clock A M at Chicago, Illinois

June 11, 1861

Worked on Highway very tired this evening weather warm and foggy all day thunder this evening shower somewhere

June 12, 1861

Carried mail to Russell got very tired. News today of battle at Great (not readable) our troops repulsed with loss 100 wounded One Conel killed with canon fire The battle was last Monday morning weather fine and warm

June 20, 1861

Went to Russell Paper Mill and carried Anna and took her to Huntington to take the cars to Ithica, N.Y. God protect her in the journey weather pleasant rained some in the night

June 28, 1861

Chopt some on Shaterak come home early Louisa went to Brother Barns this afternoon weather very warm a little shower this afternoon

June 30, 1861

Attended meeting with my family

Henry not home in 3 weeks weather warm and pleasant

July 1, 1861

at home choring and writing of returns weather pleasant. I patched the house over the bed room and butry found the shingles some decayed hope I have stopt the leak

July 7, 1861

Sunday Attended meeting with my family Brother Barnes preached very good Weather very warm flying clouds Henry at home today

July 10, 1861

carried mail to Russell Carried up 1 gallon of molasses and 7 lb sugar besides mail stuff Weather hot I had a hard time coming up the hill.

July 11, 1861

at home forenoon Brewed some beer. Afternoon went to E. Clarks to where I had potatoes last year and picked a lot of strawberries They are plenty Weather morning cloudy broke away before noon Hot wind southwest.

July 15, 1861

At home hoeing potatoes Drew up 7 loads of muck and threw into pig pen. Spread out my hay and then raked it soon again Weather cool and some flying clouds.

July 18, 1861

Forenoon mowed 2½ hours for Mrs. Cook then went to Estin Bosworths and took charge of funeral. then helpt James Squires get up some hay. Weather quite warm some wind.

July 23, 1861

At home haying a little Herd news from Sect. of War. Federal troops had to retreat before 90,000 men. Weather warm.

July 31, 1861

Carried mail to Russell. Tirzah walked to Russell to get an Ambrotype. Weather very warm, cloudy this evening.

August 3, 1861

At home not doing much extreme heat I think I have not felt well Warmest day this year dificult to work.

August 6, 1861

Went to Westfield with J. M. Squires and got some things at Allen & Clarks store Weather warm some breeze

August 7, 1861

Carried mail to Russell Samantha and Eva went with me and had ambratypes taken weather cloudy and rained some.

August 8, 1861

At home not doing much work News of a battle in Missouri Federal troops victorious weather rainy all day

August 10, 1861

At home layed a little wall at the corner of garden Eva quite sick sent for the doctor I feel quite consirned about her God have mercy on us and restore her to health Weather pleasant warm to work

Aug. 11, 1861

Sunday. Attended meeting alone Eva still quite sick don't know as she is any better quite restless this evening Weather rather cool. Henry was home today brought some sugar good boy

August 17, 1861

At home choring and went picking berries Henry come home today Charles here had 3 meals today weather forenoon cloudy sprinkled some cleared off afternoon pleasant Eva gains slowly

Sept. 2, 1861

My birthday i am 55 years old today my life seems like a dream a misspent unprofitable life at the best Oh that God would enable me to begin over again in his service that I may have biding over myself from this time forward. I have been cutting alers in Avery Chapman's lot for wood for myself. Weathr pleasant.

Shaking Off Old Images

by Andrea E. Strom

I was raised for the most part in a Vermont village. As a child and for some unknown reason I imagined that everyone from the state of Massachusetts was from a city called 'Boston' that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean inland to the New York border. Visitors from Massachusetts were, to my childish thought, from that vast bustling metropolis and were suspect as city slickers. Little did I know that as an adult I would settle down in a beautiful wilderness in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts!

The shocking thing for me was not so much that Boston wasn't stretched from the Atlantic to New York, but the super-abundance of wildlife.

Just the other day I suddenly became aware that the neighborhood children were squealing and chattering in great excitement across the street. I couldn't resist and went to see what all the commotion was about.

Four baby skunks were running along the foundation of a neighbor's house trying to find a way in. When they found the lattice skirt protecting the space beneath her porch they hurried back and forth along it looking, semi-frantically by this time, for a hole.

One baby broke ranks and came toward us spluttering and churring and stamping his soft, padded feet. The other three hid behind a tree until their brave brother (or sister) gave up and rejoined them. All four went back to running back and forth along the lattice work.

I suppose the little fellow charging us had no idea that he was dealing with children whose little hands ached to stroke the shiny white and black coats, children enchanted by the idea of how wonderful it would be to make pets out of those pretty, bright-eyed babies.

One child, in his utter excitement ignored my warnings to stay clear and ran behind the house to look for the mother. If there was none, he said, he'd take one of those babies. In a few seconds he came back running and jumping and half-skipping and craning his neck around as the momma and a fifth baby hurried along behind him.

Finally the skunks found a hole and disappeared and the crowd reluctantly dispersed. Fortunately no one had been sprayed.

Several days later in another part of town, three of us, out for an evening walk, were startled by yet another skunk

family out for theirs. Our group included a visitor from Ireland. She took one look, hiked up her long skirt and set off in flip-flop-clad feet across the stubbly field without a backward glance, my daughter was close upon her heels.

But I, foolish and curious person that I am, stood my ground just to see how far these creatures would push me. The mother led with three babies tumbling over each other in their haste to keep up with her. I sized her up as she approached. She was no larger than a half-grown cat. Her sharp eyes never left me and not once did she even hesitate. I think she knew I'd give in before she. She was right, I ran; but about ten feet away I stopped and turned to watch.

The mother, satisfied that she'd done her maternal duty turned around and ambled toward the under-brush followed by three offspring still tumbling all over each other to keep up.

This is just a sampling; we also play host to a growing Canada goose population each summer, and we have herons, woodpeckers, owls, hawks, king-

fishers, doves, hummingbirds, pheasants, woodcocks, grouse, ducks, and so on down through the most common of common birds.

We also have coyotes, wild rabbits, muskrats, beaver, racoons, porcupine, foxes, and more. Supposedly we even have mountain lions according to our painter watch, and white-tailed deer abound.

What could be more exhilarating to one who imagined all of Massachusetts to be an extended Boston than to discover recently that the state has placed radio collars on about five hundred black bears, many of which roam our area? We've had mothers with two and three cubs, loners, older cubs out for a walk on their own, and just last week a loner was seen five houses down from us in the back yard at dawn.

Even with all this evidence it's still hard to totally shake off the old image. I must admit that my childhood vision of a state-sized Boston is being severely challenged!



One Hundred Years Ago

in the Hill Towns

The following articles have been taken from the *SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN* of 1883 to show how times have (or haven't) changed.

March 21, 1883 The fellowship meeting of the Congregational churches in Southwick, Chester, Montgomery, and Feeding Hills at the Second Congregational church in Westfield yesterday drew a good attendance. In the morning Rev. J. H. Lockwood of the First church preached, having for his theme, "The spirit of willingness to improve opportunities for doing good and wisdom in discriminating." The afternoon session was largely given to a general discussion of "The duty of church members to the Sunday-school."

March 21, 1883 Russell has two water privileges near the railroad station that ought to be utilized. One is on the railroad side of the river, where a track can be laid to the mill, saving all expenses of carting, and the other on the opposite side, but near the station. If any person or company will build a mill on either site, the town will vote to exempt the property from taxes for five years.

March 26, 1883 The telephone people are talking of extending their lines to Granville if half a dozen subscribers can be secured in that place. There will doubtless be little trouble in getting that number, for a telephone line would prove

a great advantage and accomodation, saving business men and others many 10-mile drives. If the line is established probably some place will be selected where the public can use the instruments by paying 15 or 25 cents to talk to Westfield.

March 28, 1883 The new iron bridge over the Agawam river at Cummington is finished. -- Stevens and Sons have progressed with their new building so as to get the principal saw in motion. -- The town has had 117 days of sleighing, with the prospect of several more. -- Sugaring is not yet begun. -- There will be a fellowship meeting at West Cummington today. -- The ice is breaking in the Agawam and the snow is settling so gradually that fears of a freshet are allayed.

April 2, 1883 The Second Congregational society at Chester held their annual meeting Saturday and elected George N. Cone, George Pease, and Nathan A. Harwood trustees, James Keefe treasurer and collector, and George N. Cone, George Pease, Nathan A. Harwood a committee on building a parsonage.

April 10, 1883 Quite a Texas boom has been started in Cummington. L. E. Bicknell and E. A. DeWitt have gone on a prospecting trip and if they report favorably, there are "more to follow."

--James Hawley has been severely kicked by a horse but will probably recover. -- Little sugar has been made as yet.

April 23, 1883 The Russell assessors have posted notices warning persons to bring in their lists of taxable property.

April 24, 1883 The Union agricultural society will hold their last institute in Agricultural hall at Blandford Thursday evening. The speaker is Herbert Myrick, his subject being "Some Neglected Sources of Farm Profit." A sugar eat and free supper will follow.

April 25, 1883 The summer term of all the Middlefield schools began Monday. --The Churches are making repairs at the lower mill and the inhabitants hope they will set the wheels whirling before long. -- An inch or two of snow fell Monday night.

April 25, 1883 Augustine Hamilton's restaurant at Huntington took fire Monday evening and the stock was destroyed. --The Bay State telephone

company will soon extend their lines to Chester and Lee, giving Huntington communication with Westfield...-- The ground was white with snow yesterday morning, and the forests presented a beautiful appearance.

April 30, 1883 The recent Blandford farmers' institute did not draw the usual crowds, the measles scare keeping many away.--William R. Nye, an enterprising young farmer, died suddenly last week of measles and was buried Thursday. -- Maple sugar this year is small in quantity and poor in quality. Those who had not gathered their sap buckets before the 23d had as good a flow of sap during the week as at any time during the season.

May 3, 1883 D. W. Lovell of Cumington, merchant and postmaster for many years, has sold the remnants of his goods at auction and goes soon to Battle Creek, Mich., to enter the paper business. -- Plowing is begun and beef cattle are turned out to pasture. Maple sap ran very freely from fresh bored trees Tuesday.

BECKONING

by Dwight Francis

*New Engand church spires,
Tapering white cones among the hills,
Protect from the storm's fury,
Being well grounded.*

*An open church doorway
Sustains its invitation
Through greeters' genuine warmth,
People caring, and making others glad.*

*Spire and columned temple
Beckon welcome, with assurance
That Faith grows out of hopes and deeds,
Strengthening each other in our walk with God.*

Selected Remarks and Observations Made by Justin Hitchcock

Chosen From the Original Manuscript

“There is nothing in the history of a boy that is worth recording. I shall make only brief remarks occasionally respecting my family and myself which fell under my observation during my living in Granville.

My father, Luke Hitchcock, married my mother Lucy Mirick in Springfield, April 1747. My parents had twelve children, all except one grew up to manhood. Four were born in Springfield, and eight whilst living in Granville.

My father did not own much land in Springfield and thought he might do better on a farm. At the time, Granville was a new town or district, twenty miles west of Springfield. It had previously been called Bedford Plantation.

I remember but few things of Springfield, because I was but four years old. I do recall the old schoolhouse and the master's ferule and pointers for the children. I remember Aunt Pomeroy visited us, and that I rocked brother

Mirick and her son Simeon in one cradle. We crossed the Connecticut River, and I remember seeing the bottom of the river where it was the deepest.

The farm in Granville was new and rough, and my father had to labor hard to bring it too. As soon as the land was cleared and improved it produced a great plenty of grass so that we could keep a large stock of cattle through the summer, but the winters were long and severe. The consequence was, that we scarcely ever had enough hay to keep all the stock through the winter. Almost every spring we discovered we had lost many head.

We used to make a single path in the snow in March. The young cattle would go down the path and browse on the tops of trees we had cut down for them.

The road where we lived was on a height of land and descended a little east and west. (South Lane, West Granville). The land was fenced with Virginia Fence, and the snow usually drifted in so as to

fill it even to the top. The men did many a hard day's work to keep the road passable. In order for two sleighs or teams to pass, both had to stop and tread the snow on each side, so that the horses might stand, and then turn the sleigh upon its side while the other passed.

One day while at school, a gun was fired near our house, and I was told it was a soldier returning from the army. This was the first I knew of war. Soon after, my father came home one day, and said such a man was pressed into service. My idea was, that they laid the man on a board and then laid a board upon him and added a weight of stones to press him until he would consent to go into the army.

In those days deer were plentiful in Granville, and my father killed many each year. We made maple sugar, enough for our family's use. The winters were severe, and a great depth of snow fell.

I remember my father went on two journeys, one to Boston, and the other to New York in one of those bad winters. He returned from one of them on a very high mare, and to me it seemed as though he was riding in the air. He brought back four potatoes, two of them were frozen. From the other two we planted fourteen hills of potatoes and got four bushels. They were called Bilboes.

My father was a Selectman and an Assessor in Granville for many years. Very few years of his life passed without he being engaged in some kind of public town business. About the time we moved to Granville one of father's Springfield neighbors moved here also. His name was James Burt. My father was chosen Deacon of the Church which displeased Mr. Burt and from then on, the Burts appeared on the reserve, and were unsociable, seldom visiting us. My parents intimated they thought he was

disappointed that he was not chosen to the office himself.

My father went often to Springfield, his native place. Once in December on returning home he stopped at the house of Eldad Taylor Esqr. at Westfield. Father had been without dinner, and as he went into the room he received a nauseous smell which made him sick. As he went to the fire he saw two men drying their clothes. They proved to be soldiers returning from the army. Father asked them if they had had the smallpox. They said they had it several weeks ago, but were cleansed from it.

About two weeks after this episode, father became ill. What seems strange, after all the warnings he had had, he was not inclined to think it was the smallpox. He sent for a doctor who had never had the disorder, and knew nothing about treating it. The family staid in the house with him until another doctor came and said it was the smallpox. By then father was broken out all over, yet no one in the family took it from him.

It was now in the depth of winter and a family of small children all had to move out of the house and go where the neighbors would take us in. The cattle and horses had to be taken care of at the barn, and not more than three people in town had ever had the disorder. Such was our unhappy situation at this time. To add to our troubles the entire family had the itch. My father's case of smallpox was extremely bad and for fourteen days he had been bereft of his reason to a degree, but through divine goodness we lived through it, and by spring we were free from the disorders.

Our farm was about one hundred acres. We raised wheat, it could be raised easier than rye. There was a tract of land lying within less than half a mile of our house, belonging to the heirs of Mr.

Boylston of Boston. We, with the rest of the neighbors improved part of the land. Whether the heirs ever gave us consent or not I do not know, but they knew it was improved and did not forbid it, considering that it would command a better price improved than it would wild, this proved to be true when it was sold. Besides raising a large crop of wheat we had thirty or forty acres of land cleared up.

In regards to fashions in those days they varied. Men wore low crowned hats with large brims generally down flat. It was rare to see one cocked up. Their coats had long skirts, large puffs at the shoulders, and three large buttons to close them. Large buttons were on the pocket flaps. They wore leather breeches, and brass shoe buckles.

At one time the women wore small caps, no hats or bonnets. Afterwards they wore a small hat without a crown down flat on the head. Women and girls wore stays, and some wore hoops. The men wore a weed around the hat for mourning tied behind, and the ends hanging down the back. For mourning the women wore a large hood and veil which covered them all up.

Our family were fond of music. My father and mother could sing. My brother Charles played well on the violin. I was fond of music when young, although I made awkward work at it at first and never got any insight of the rules until I grew up. Being fond of singing I pricked off a book of music in square and diamond notes.

My father was very careful to get us an education as the circumstances in a new settlement would permit. One, Mr. Doer Smith, kept the school, and he was a proper tyrant. He kept a stick by him, long enough to reach every boy in the school. Although he improved his

advantage, so that we all feared him, few if any felt any affection for him, and the consequence was that we learned slowly. After him we had Mr. Harvey, a young man and a stranger nineteen years old, but he used a very different method with us, and instead of going to school as a task, we now went as a pleasure. Scarcely any storms or blowing winds stopped my brother Mirick and I from attending, and it is to this school, and instructor we are indebted for the little we know of writing and spelling.

On the farm our business was husbandry, and we had a great deal of driving and plowing to do. This was a business I never liked. Brother Mirick showed more ambition as a good plow boy. I was willing to have him praised as a teamster if I could be freed from my turn of driving. I had an inclination to learn a trade. One day my father brought home a house clock with wooden works. I studied it through and wished I could go into the trade of shop joiner, so that I could learn to make clocks.

An opportunity soon came for either Mirick or I to go to Springfield and learn the hatter's trade. I interceded for the chance and obtained it wishing to get free from so much driving team. September, 1767 I went to live with Mr. Moses Church in Springfield for the purpose of learning the hatter's trade.

About this time the dispute between Great Britain and her Colonies began to be more serious than ever before. The Parliament passed the famous Stamp Act. When it reached our country it created a general uneasiness and was opposed universally here. A Congress of Deputies from nine of the Colonies convened in New York. The opposition which this act met with in England and here was expressed in petitions and memorials. A change in the Ministry took place in

England about this time, and the Stamp Act was repealed and much rejoicing took place upon the occasion.

Although I had removed from an upland town thinly settled and went to live in a Public House in a thickly settled town, yet so strong had my attachment grown to the place where I had lived about ten years I was very homesick and at times would have freely given up my place of learning a trade, if I had not been so proud to propose it to my father.

After living in Springfield I became fond of the place and the people as I had been in Granville. I lived in a Tavern and there were many things to do morning and night, I even tended bar. When I went to live with Mr. Church he had but one apprentice younger than I, but older in years of experience. He often advised me not to accept all the drudgery Mr. Church piled upon me. I never made much complaint nor could I have altered the establishment's customs. I had much difficulty to live peaceably with my fellow apprentice. He could tell a lie with as composed a face as any older practitioner could.

After I got over being homesick my time passed agreeably. My father recommended me to spend my leisure time in reading, and I followed his advice. I read the History of England and other books, but particularly dramatic pieces and some novels. At the time there was a great cry against novels, however they never did me any harm. If I know anything of what is proper in the style of writing I am partly indebted to this kind of reading as the language in these books is generally good.

I finally had a chance to gratify my wishes to learn to sing. When it came to tuneing and attempting to sing, I found I knew nothing, and I made awkward work of it especially beating time. Mr. J.

Stickney was the master. There were a dozen boys in the class. After much tutoring Mr. Stickney said A. Bliss, I. Ingersol and myself could not learn and it would be best for us not to try. However, I did learn something about music. Others in the class were singers. I didn't realize it at the time, but my voice hadn't completely changed. In spite of Mr. Ingersol's evaluation I continued to love music. My friend, A. Bliss and myself spent many happy hours enjoying music.

By the time I was nineteen I began to compose. I sent one of my numbers to Granville expecting it to be praised. Here, I found I had quite over-rated my abilities and have since seen how easily pleased we can become with our own productions.

We had stated days work at the hatter's shop and a quick workman might get his day's work done so as to have time to do other things. I found time for fishing and hunting. I read all the dramatic pieces I could find. I read the History of England, and the London Magazines. I read but little of religious books. I lived agreeably about this time. I was in the company of many young people. However I kept away from gaming.

Mr. Church once sent me to Albany to purchase beaver fur. As the smallpox was prevalent in the area I stayed no longer than was necessary to purchase fifty weight of Beaver to bring home.

It was usual for me to go to Granville once a year to visit my family and friends. I commonly went in May. Many of the inhabitants came from Connecticut and they kept the practice of keeping Election Day as a high day or holiday."

(Thus ends Justin's Observations and Remarks)

Granville Congregational Church Records
Compiled by Rev. T. M. Cooley, D.D.

“Deacon Luke Hitchcock, father of Justin, enlisted in the army as a volunteer, when his age exempted him. This is full proof of his patriotism. He died of Camp Fever in New Lebanon, October 1777, returning home from the attack on Crown Point. A Mr. Douglas, a stranger; was friendly enough to take him in and he died at his home. Deacon

Hitchcock was a man of talents and education, gifted in prayer and skilled in state affairs.

Rev. Edward Hitchcock D.D. a former president of Amherst College was Deacon Luke's grandson, an honor to his family and country.

Luke's son Justin the hatter, left Springfield and resided with his wife and family in Deerfield until in his death in 1822. He never lost his love and interest in music.”

My Mother Used to Say:

by Amorette Childs

It would be too bad to lose some of the wise sayings which have traditionally been passed on from mother to daughter or son. But with the noise of mass communication it seems there is less talk these days and much less remembering. Anyway our older citizens seem to remember more of them; so before they are lost we would like to publish some examples and invite our readers to contribute more.

Mend your clothes upon your back and poverty you'll never lack.

You'll never miss the water 'till the well runs dry.

If you sew on Sunday you'll have to rip it out with your nose after you die.

A penny saved is a penny earned.

Patience is a virtue.
Possess it if you can.
Seldom found in woman
Never found in man.

A stitch in time saves nine.

When the days begin to lengthen the cold begins to strengthen.

The burnt child fears the fire.

Once bitten twice shy.

Lazy folk work the best when the sun is in the West.

Two heads are better than one even though one is a cabbage head.

Penny wise and pound foolish.

For early peas plant before the 17th of March.

Waste not, want not.

You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Pride goes before a fall.

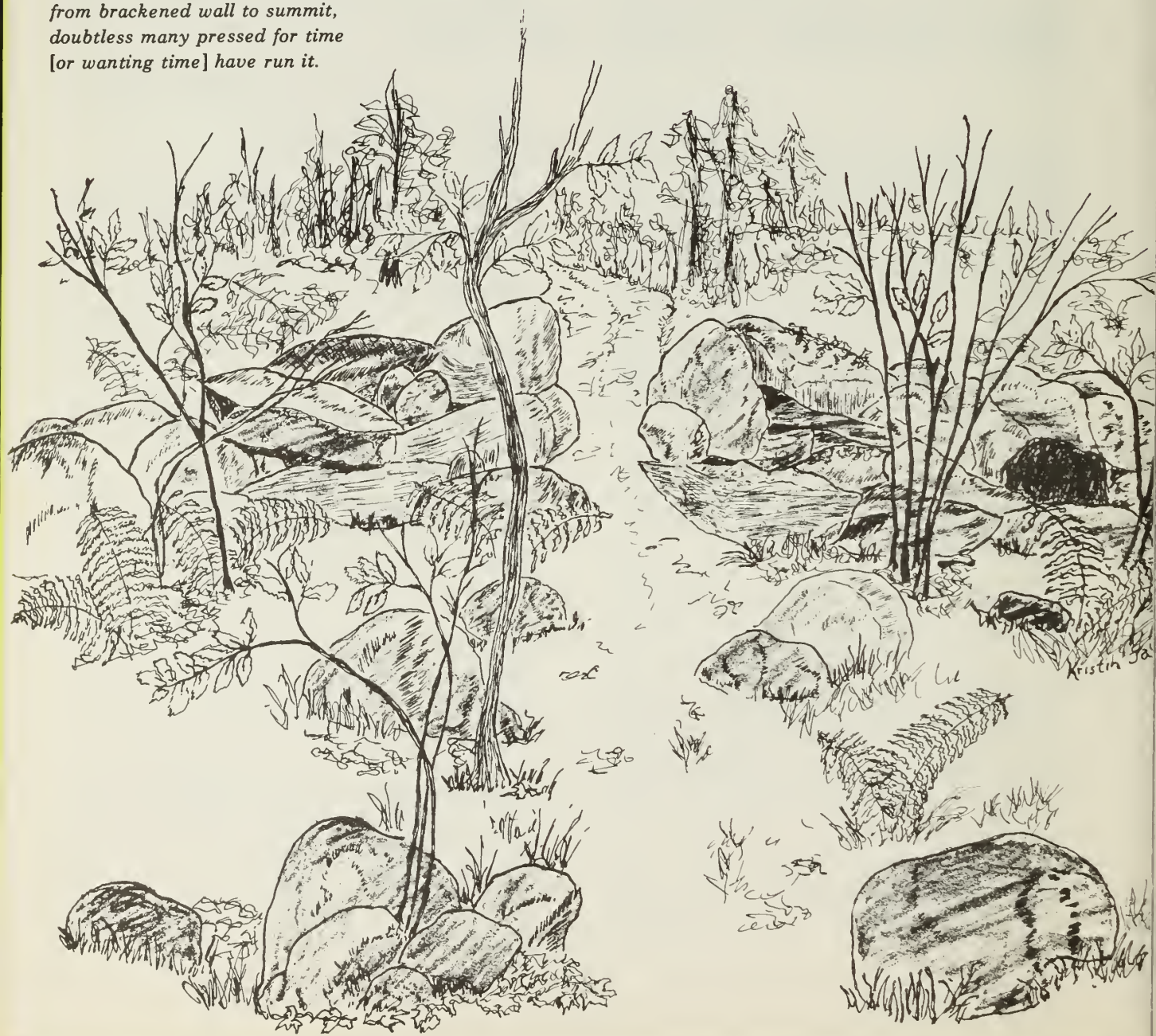
the breach

by c j blake

*how first it happened, none can say
or if they can, none will.
a few suspect the culprit, frost,
though seeing how the stones were tossed,
i'd guess more likely it was boys
or someone quick & curious
about what lay beyond the crest
to west of yonder hill.*

*& judging by the path that climbs
from brackened wall to summit,
doubtless many pressed for time
[or wanting time] have run it.*

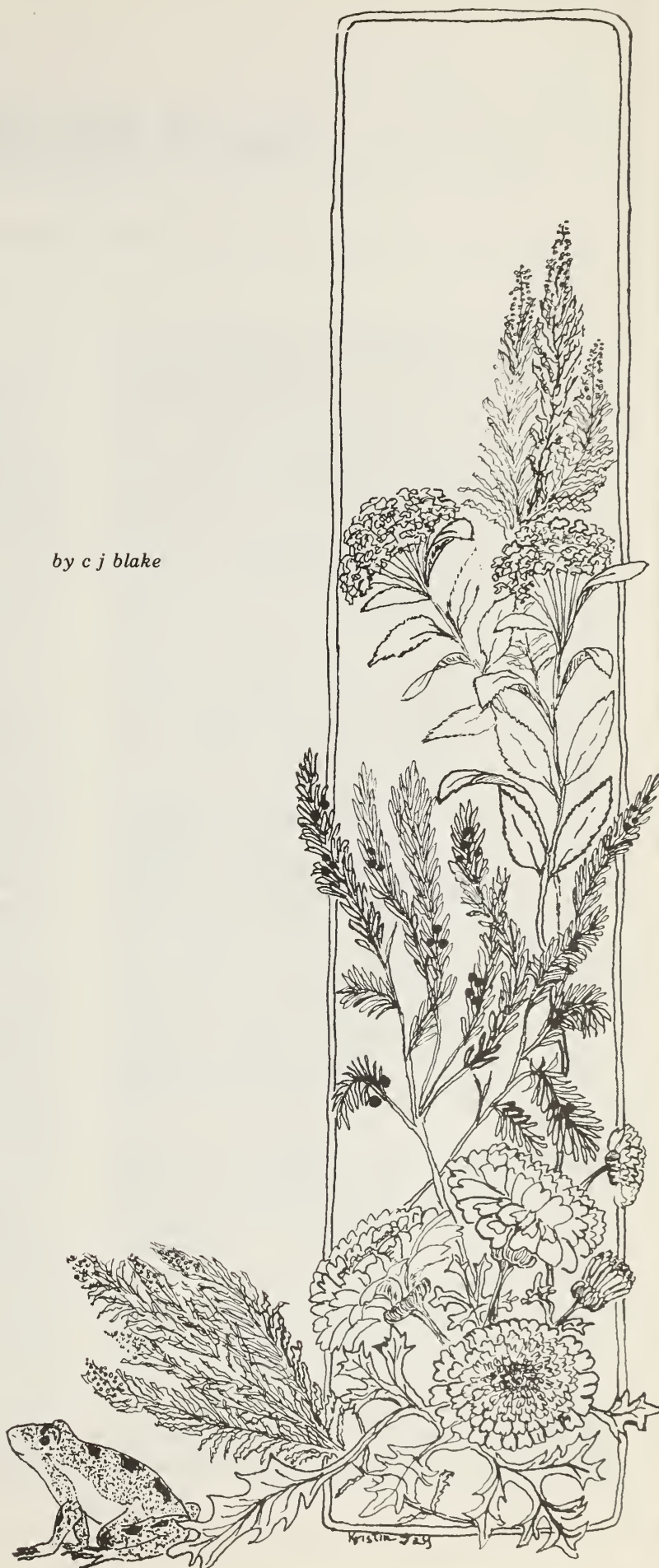
*now though i recognize the pride
attending private property,
i won't deny the boy in me
who pulls us through & past the spill
of boulders strewn on either side
so we can walk paths greener still
than both a winter state of mind
& the weary road we leave behind.*



a space undenied

by c j blake

*at the end of a garden
rainbowing zinnias
zesty with spices
& whorling with mums
i've left a place wild
& perennially free -
a space for the blue-eyed
 the fern & the star;
a home for the joe pye
 the wort & the toad.
& at length
 when i come
 to the end of my strength
& the joys of this rainbowing ride,
would that there be
such a space undenied;
 a place wholly wild & free.*



North Blandford

By Percy Wyman

North Blandford was a busy place many years ago. In the eighteen nineties, it was like a place on fire. The first business in town was the woolen mill; but just where it stood no one can seem to tell, I think it stood on the side of the stream, on the left hand side. An old building stood there in 1908. A family lived there in just the west end. I've asked many times what that old building was used for, but no one knew. It was 100 feet long and close to the brook. I remember now that the family living there with their many children were the Miners.

Back about the same time the cheese factory was built: a two story building which stood where the Chester Road is now. The milk was brought from all of the towns around as far away as Granville. I don't know when they stopped making cheese, but they used the hall upstairs for dancing until the 1890's. By that time, the footings were not very sound because the floor would go up and down.

They also made baskets in North Blandford, and in the 1890s they were making machinery there. I know, because Father traded a cow for a Melbourne Wagon in an even exchange.

The old blacksmith shop stood beyond the old building which I think was the mill. Mr. Bliss was the blacksmith.

The first church was down near the Blair Road with two small buildings near by. This church burned in the middle of

the 1890's and they built the one you see today on top of the hill.

The carding board shop run by Byron and Fred Waite was at the top of the hill where the old Chester Road was then. The carding boards were made of beech, the best found around with no knots in the wood. These were shipped all over the United States until 1908.

I can see the old hotel standing across the road from the school. It was three stories high and well kept up until about 1900. Lee Higgins had a store in the north end until 1902. It doesn't seem possible that a town can change so quickly. It was a prosperous place as small towns go. They had water power which made the carding board and woolen mills run.

In the 1900's many of the farms were left to decay, growing up first into brush, then woods. The City of Springfield bought all but a few places in town for watershed. Most of the young had left before this to take jobs with more pay and less work. A farmer named Gibbs held out until 1970, raising Holstein cattle.

The church still stands on the hill, the brick foundation made from Blandford soil. On the right hand side by the brook three houses stood for a long time, but now these people have moved away, too. The old church has been converted into a home, and its new neighbors are newer houses built by people who find the new woodlands a desirable place to live.

The Williamsburg Flood of 1874

BY Dr. and Mrs. F. W. Goodhue

Reprinted from the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, April 5, 1963 with permission.

During the early decades of the 1800's, the predominance of agriculture in the economy of Williamsburg was increasingly challenged by the rapidly expanding industrial development of the community. The banks of Mill River became lined with more and more factories and mills and its waters were checked and diverted by dams and sluiceways.

With so many firms dependent upon the flow of Mill River for their power it was important that their source be reasonably consistent the year round. As more and more of the woodlands on the watershed were eliminated for homesites and pastureland, the storage and gradual release of ground water was disrupted. This resulted in a very rapid run-off in wet seasons and very low streams in dry spells. For the alleviation of these cycles of over abundance and scarcity of flowing water, the various manufacturers devised a plan for a storage reservoir near the headwaters of the stream.

About 1864 or 1865, these businessmen formed the Williamsburg Reservoir Company. In 1872 this company, by a special act of the legislature, combined with the Mill River Reservoir Company, representing the Northampton industries, to form the Williamsburg and Mill River Reservoir Company.

In 1865 specifications for a dam had been drawn up by the original company

and a site selected. The dam was to be 405 feet long and 42 feet high at its center. The site chosen was close to the source of the East Branch of Mill River in the northeastern corner of the township. This was the logical spot for a dam to form a reservoir which was to cover an area of 114 acres to an average depth of 24 feet for a total of something over 600 million gallons of water.

The contractors chosen were Emery B. Wells of Northampton and Joel Bassett of Easthampton, who submitted a bid of \$35,000. Work was started in July 1865 and the structure was finished in January 1866. Dissatisfaction of the work was expressed early by various persons and the dam was not filled until further strengthening, rip-rapping of the inner surface, and attempts to stop several streams issuing from the base of the structure were carried out. Apparently the dam was viewed at least twice by the County Commissioners who did not approve it on the first visit, but finally did so in October of 1868, by which time the reservoir was filled.

At the time the water was finally allowed to fill the reservoir, C. G. Spellman, who was superintendent of the dam for the reservoir company, was at the site. He was less than sanguine about the ability of the structure to withstand the water pressure and later stated that he



fully expected it to collapse then.

In any event, the dam held, and through the following years, Mr. Spellman came to believe it to be indestructible, this despite the continued presence of streams issuing from under the base and repeated slippage of large amounts of earth from the face. A notation in the diary of C. G. Hill on April 11, 1867 is "Men and horses sent to work on new reservoir. Looked upon as unsafe."

The spring of 1874 was a wet one. George Cheney, the caretaker of the dam, who lived in a house overlooking the site, kept the water at a level two feet below the top of the earth embankment by regulating the flow over the spillway and through the pipe in the base of the dam. He apparently also had some apprehensions as to the safety of the structure. It is recorded that on the evening of May 15, he had conversation with Mr. Spellman concerning the dam and his concern was belittled.

It was raining again on the morning of

May 16 when Mr. Cheney made his customary inspection at 6 A.M. All appeared as usual with no evidence of impending difficulty. As he was finishing breakfast, his father called to him to look out the window. The scene must have appalled him tremendously, for he saw a large section near the base of the dam go crashing down the stream. Immediately, he raced to the gates and opened them full in an attempt to relieve the pressure. He realized that this was not enough, and that it was inevitable that the rest of the dam would soon disintegrate.

In greatest haste he mounted his horse and galloped the more than three miles to the village to warn Mr. Spellman. There is disagreement as to whether time was lost in convincing that gentleman of the gravity of the situation but, in any event, Mr. Cheney was sent on to Belcher's livery stable to obtain a fresh horse and to warn the residents.

Meanwhile, behind Mr. Cheney the rush of water through the defect in the dam rapidly undermined and weakened

the structure until it collapsed, and a 40-foot wall of water started its relentless progress toward the village below.

Robert Loud, who lived on the Conway Road overlooking the valley containing the reservoir, was on his way to plow the fields when he saw the water rushing through the dam. He ran all the way to Williamsburg and also began to spread the alarm. It is recorded that his health was never again robust as a result of his extreme exertion.

Collins Graves, on his morning deliveries, was one of those who heard George Cheney's warning of impending disaster. He cut his horse from the wagon and started at a gallop for Haydenville. He arrived there in time for the alarm to spread and for most people in homes and factories close to the river to flee to higher ground. When Mr. Graves attempted to return to Williamsburg he was forced to flee out of harm's way himself by the oncoming water. George Cheney, with a fresh horse, started for Haydenville immediately following Collins Graves, but was forced to turn back because of rapidly rising water over the road.

While all these events were transpiring, the overwhelming force of millions of gallons of water was beginning its awful rampage. The rolling, foaming crest smashed its way through the narrow valley below the dam site, uprooting trees, picking up boulders, and gouging the earth.

For a distance of about three miles the torrent gathered momentum as the terrain dropped from an altitude of over 800 feet to approximately 500 feet. When it finally burst on the first man-made structures, they were overwhelmed with explosive violence. Bullard Bridge was swept away along with the nearby house occupied by the Livingstone Bartlett family. Here the

raging waters claimed their first human victims; Mrs. Bartlett and her two daughters were drowned.

From then to the final exhaustion in the Connecticut River, the course was one of almost complete destruction of all that stood in the path of the flood. On its way to the confluence of the east and west branches of Mill River, the gigantic windrow of water with its battering-ram trees, and now remnants of buildings, gouged out Spellman's dam, smashed Spellman's button factory and sawmill below, overpowered the Nash Street bridge and grist mill dam. Grist mill and saw mill below the dam disappeared entirely, along with nearby houses.

From the time the flood first struck the village until it reached the James Woolen Mill (now Clark's lumber mill), every building on or near the stream was swept away or badly damaged, with the exception of one house and one factory situated just below the junction of the two streams to form the main river. James Mill was flooded, but left in place situated between the old channel on the north and a new one on the south. The bridge below this mill went the way of previous bridges and the all-engulfing tide smashed against the railroad embankment. Here, for a moment the rushing torrent hesitated, water backed up along the bed of the Joe Wright Brook where a great amount of debris and the bodies of many victims of the inundation were deposited.

Then the mass of water and debris, its front still 30 feet high and sending spray higher than the trees, descended on the homes and mills of Skinnerville. The four-story wooden Skinner silk mill and its ancillary buildings were utterly destroyed. In spite of the short warning, all 102 persons working in the mill were able to reach safety. Some twenty homes

with their outbuildings were swept away in the short extent of the village. The residence of William Skinner was spared, and later was dismantled to be rebuilt in Holyoke.

Two more bridges were destroyed before the flood reached the Hayden and Gere Brass Company in Haydenville. The dam here was destroyed. The brick buildings at first withstood the pressure, but finally a hole was breached by the battering of a house being carried on the crest, the water rushed in, and one after another the nine buildings comprising the factory disappeared. One small section and a chimney, by some freak, were left standing. Below, the river channel was deep and confined, the buildings were clustered closely along the banks and the rampaging destruction swept away or severely mauled thirty-one of them. Below the center of the gutted village, where the road to Leeds turned down hill near the Fort Hill, a tobacco factory met its fate along with an adjacent dam. The Hayden Cotton Mills (now the Noble Manufacturing Company) was badly damaged and an associated gas works destroyed. With a final burst of infamy, the raging torrent destroyed six more houses and claimed further unfortunates as it proceeded on to further massive destructions in Leeds, Florence, and Northampton.

And now silence. The silence of death broken only by the hissing of the falling rain. In the space of about an hour, three peaceful, industrious villages had been despoiled to a degree hardly to be imagined. Forty-five buildings in Williamsburg and forty-one in Haydenville and Skinnerville were destroyed or severely damaged. These included a major portion of the industrial property in the town. Every bridge and dam in the path of the water was carried away or

destroyed. The road between the villages was ripped to impassability for most of its extent.

Beyond all of this, and of much greater import, was the fact that 145 citizens of the town perished. Before noon of the terrible day, the stunned citizens of Williamsburg were hard at work in the heartbreaking task of locating the bodies of their relatives, neighbors, and friends. This entailed hard labor in searching the piled wreckage strewn along the path of the raging destruction. A thick layer of mud and silt covered the areas of backwash and many bodies were reclaimed from these areas. As they were found, they were collected in the Williamsburg Town Hall and the Haydenville Village Hall. Those not searching for the victims were attempting to salvage possessions.

In the days that followed, the people came. People came from neighboring towns and cities, distant cities and towns, and from other states. Many hundreds came to give of their time and money to repair the material and human devastation. Many other hundreds came to satiate their curiosity concerning the misery of others. A few came to pillage and to loot.

A central relief agency was formed in Northampton and well over \$50,000 in donations was received, including \$10,000 voted by the Connecticut Legislature and about \$30,000 from the city of Boston. A sum of \$100,000 was appropriated by the General Court of Massachusetts for the reconstruction and replacement of roads and bridges.

An inquest at Northampton "concerning the death of John Atkinson", one of the flood victims, was commenced on May 25 and concluded on May 29. Many witnesses gave testimony concerning the

construction of the dam, its apparent weaknesses and its final catastrophic demise. Quoting from the Springfield Republican for May 29, 1874: "The testimony given of the fourth day of the reservoir inquest in Northampton was of great importance, showing forcibly the miserable economy of the company as

represented by their committee, and the ignorant carelessness with which the work was done, even under the certainly vague specifications given; and presenting the well-considered opinions of experienced men on the causes of the terrible final catastrophe."

METAMORPHOSIS

by Gerard Chapman

*One morning when I cleared a path through heavy snow
that lay in drifts upon the lawn,
and every branch and twig was sharply etched
against a blue and cloudless sky,
the world was bright with pristine radiance
and I rejoiced at beholding Nature's splendor
and my heart was glad to see the handiwork of God.*

*But then the clouds appeared
to draw a veil against the sun
and a sirocco came to warm the land,
and rain began to wash away the mantle
that so completely had concealed the drabness
of the winter world of suspended growth:
there once again appeared the withered stalks
and dark brown remnants of a greener time.
The melting snow and falling rain
contributed to rivulets
which swelled the brooks and made the river rise;
its icy cover cracked and broke
to set afloat a grinding might of surging floes,
that piled against a dam and caused a breach.
The liberated waters gushed,
and flooded low-lying land and structures situated there,
to ruin the artifacts of man.*

*So in a day
the beautiful was changed to ugliness
and the beneficence of God converted
to an agent of destruction. Upon reflection,
we conclude that God - or Nature - is
neither benevolent nor malignant but indifferent
to the sensibility of man
and his environment,
and that which he perceives as beauty
is as one with ugliness in Nature's sight:
that beauty or its converse
is indeed that which the eye beholds
and the mind interprets
in reference to an acquired esthetic norm.*

Rain, swollen river burst South County dam
--Headline, The Berkshire Eagle, 28 January 1976

Mother's Day

by Marjorie Lieneck

81 Crisfield Street
Yonkers, New York 10710
November 2, 1982

The Editor
STONE WALLS
Box 85
Huntington, Massachusetts 01050

Dear Editor:

The Berkshire Hills are very important to my family and me. Almost twenty years ago, we bought a home there when we had to give up our house on Long Island to move first into faculty housing, then into a parsonage. Since then our children and we have regarded our old farmhouse in Worthington as home and the other addresses we have had as transient stopovers.

We spend precious little time there these years; it *is* precious, though. We are bound to those hills by many ties; one of these may become clear to

I pull out of the grass-grown dirt drive that curves past the porch, empty now before the season. In the back of the station wagon [*You would never approve of this wagon -- too large, too luxurious, too...irresponsible*], two flats of mixed marigolds -- bright, lively, certainly simple, weeds almost, they grow so carelessly. [*You always liked them. It was their spiciness I think appealed to you.*] Beside them, half a dozen yellow daisies I bought at the stand yesterday on my way in. [*I can hear you now. "You bought daisies?"*] This morning I arranged them

you as you read the accompanying manuscript. I wrote the piece after a visit to our house, alone, one May. Edith Hamilton in *The Greek Way* says, "Pain is the most individualizing experience there is;" yet all of us sooner or later experience the pain of grief. For me, writing this was a kind of therapy which helped me to deal with my grief. Perhaps reading it will help others to deal with theirs.

As an English teacher I recognize, however, that the piece is neither essay, nor poem, nor short story; that it is very personal, perhaps too private, and therefore unsuitable for publication. I leave that to your judgement. My back issues of *STONE WALLS* testify to the soundness of that judgment in the past.

Sincerely,

(Marjorie A. Lieneck
Mrs. William C. Lieneck, jr.)

in an old pickle jar I found high on a kitchen shelf. Plain. Fresh. Oh, a concession or two to artifice [*Will you mind, you who hated the made-up, the put-on?*]. Two delicate stems of baby's breath lacing with eyelet the dark green foliage and optimistic half-yellow buds; a single sheet of green florist's tissue gathered at the neck, dressing the pickle jar. So meager. So apt.

I hope the old shears and the claw cultivator, too long unused, will cut through the tough grass, the not-yet-

warmed, barely thawed earth. I wonder what happened to the old trowel. I couldn't find it in the garage, among the dried paints and piled picnic benches, the broken lawn mowers and outgrown bikes -- the furniture of a succession of summers. No matter. The ice cream spade I discovered again in the utensil drawer will have to make do. [*You were always "making do." Eat it up, wear it out, why buy a dress when a few yards of good washable cotton, a few hours' time and you could make one?*]

The wagon rolls on between the rows of blue spruce, pauses briefly at the road, where the black metal sign tacked to a tree marks the entrance to our "Oblivion." [*I recall the first time we saw these spruce, you and I, when the snow had finally melted and we came to see what we had bought beneath the drifts to be what we'd call home. They were scrawny seedlings then. See how they have spread. Almost to the drive. And, like the children, how they've grown. Stretch out and touch them at the tips, twelve, fourteen feet into the sky. So much for time passing. So much for forgetting.*]

Before me lie the bare potato fields, new plowed and furrowed close up to our pines. [*In winter the snowmobiles skim and snort across these fields. Occasionally one assaults a young and tender pine. There's one down now. You didn't have to be raped, you said, to know that rape was an outrage. This rape too would outrage you.*]

The wagon turns onto the empty road. Eight on the dashboard clock, early even here on a Sunday morning in May, when the sky is woolly gray and the earlier sun has left only pink threads of promise. The car slows again as it passes the blueberries, where the drive meets the

road a second time after circling the paltry orchard of winter-weary pear and apple. I make a mental note to gather up the broken branches trapped in the freshening boughs. They will make good kindling. [*An hour ago over morning coffee, I saw you in the fire you loved so much. Your lovely long-fringed shawl of apricot silk fell from the back of the Boston rocker to my shoulders. And you were there in the gold and apricot glow of the crackling apple wood. So many years since mother and child rocked together there; now, only a shawl to say you are with me still.*]

The split trunk of the crabapple is mending. Imagine. [*You were so sure I had backed the car into it. But that was the supple aspen and it had sprung right back. It was an act of God had split this trunk, and even it was slowly mending.*]

The car drifts now almost without driving toward the Corners, around to the right, then right again, not pausing for the traffic light absurdly blinking at an unseeing world like a lighthouse on some abandoned shore. Through the vaulted nave of maples here, the road seems to stretch to the mountains and beyond. To one side, across another half-turned field, I can look to the warm brown where our house clears the pine break protecting it from the wind which sweeps across the open field. [*You never saw the house stained brown, did you? The kids did that, wanted to do that, scraping it down to the bare boards the summer after -- yes, after -- the last one you spent here.*]

Past the maples, past the Medical Center, past the road to where an age ago the kids used to go target-shooting with their twenty-twos [*How unhappy you were with that!*] Now, on the left, half-hidden by a wild cherry coming into leaf, the white wood sign black-lettered

“Cold Street.” [*A fine sense of place, these settlers, you’d remarked.*]

I turn left, slowly now to follow the carefully tended stone wall keeping out -- cows? -- and keeping in the rows of other stones, tilted and pitted by two hundred years of wind and weather, and timeless still. [*Remember the first time we were here? Here a Civil War soldier, there -- oh, look! a baby, only two months old. And this -- this must be the great-grandfather of the bent-up old gent down the road.*] Ahead, at the last break in the wall, I make a right into the new section and come to a stop just where the rutted tracks begin to wind back upon themselves.

The stone, stark, white, seems whiter and more solid than marble in the gray glare of this translucent May morning. Someone has been here. The grass is clipped. There will be other visits in honor of this day. But now I know without looking that no one else is here, and I am grateful. [*It is good to be alone with you, on this day, in this place. Once you said that very little separated us, but that little struck at the very roots of our being. That was true. But now the truth is that the roots of our being strike at this separation. I am closer to you now than then. And we are both closer to God because of it. Do you feel the closeness as I do? Do you have any idea how you have changed me, helped me to grow? Do you sense how present you are in your absence?*]

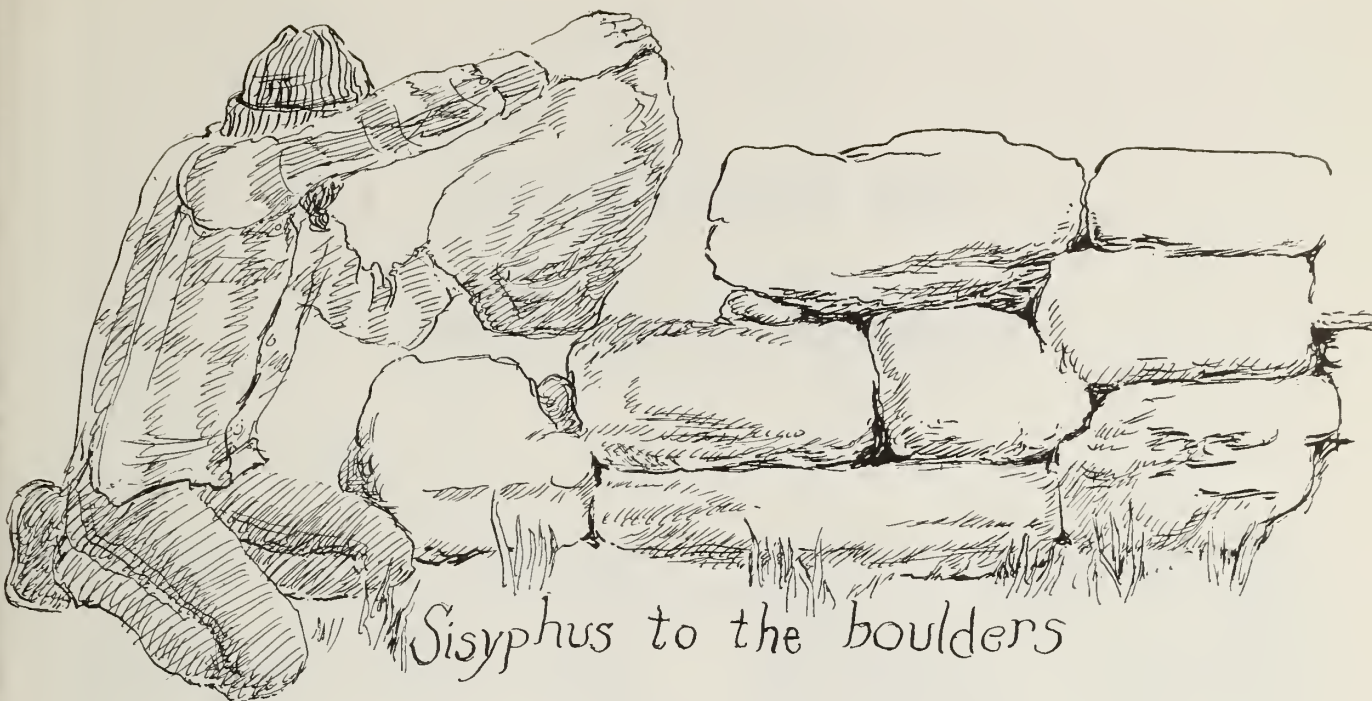
And I am glad I brought the marigolds and the daisies and the plain pickle jar and the poor tools. It feels good to work in the earth, to let the warming earth sift through my fingers, to rub the weedy roots clean and toss them into the brush, to set the seedlings one by one across the base of the family tablet, to tamp down

the moist soil and watch the proud stems straighten. [*Are we all marigolds, weedy and spicy, straightening when tamped?*] I kneel at the foot of the small stone where your name marks you in dust. With the ice cream spade, I scoop out the size of the pickle jar and set it beneath the surface. I have not even forgotten to bring water. And soon the daisies and the baby’s breath are in place. [*But I am not in place. I am closer to you here than anywhere but here is too far away.*] I see them gold through a mist, and I brush the granules of soil, now gold too in the flickers of sunlight, from your name inscribed in the stone. And I weep. I weep for your golden hair, long and straight and silk on your apricot shawl.

I weep and my fingers trace the years cut in the stone, fleeing, fleeting years filled with the furniture of the successive seasons. I weep for the golden memories, the small and the large graduations, the tragic and tender triumphs, the triumphs of tenderness. [*You and the hemlocks and the bitter holly hear me crying now, sobbing not at all softly, oblivious to the company I am in, all the company of heaven here in my invisible church.*] I trace once more the years you were loaned to me, the twenty-five brief, loving, temporary years so permanently cut in stone now. And I weep for the golden moments missed, the wedding I will never see, the babies you will never hold, the beautiful tender tragic tempestuous moments we will never live and love through. [*Did you know, do you know how much I loved you, miss you? Please God, let her hear me now. Dear God, do you hear me now?*]

Requiescat in pacem, my daughter.

In pacem, my firstborn child.



Sisyphus to the boulders

STONE WALLING

by Suzanne Hoyle

*How I love playing midwife to the rocks,
Sisyphus to the boulders,
So consumed in this task that tests and flatters
Winter-soft muscles.
It does not matter that this patch of earth
Was never intended as a hayfield
or pasture;
The time-honored duty is performed
While keeping no one out,
Staying none who wish to leave.
I pull and plant these reluctant stones
For the times when they say;
"Here. Here is where the line is drawn;
Rest mind and soul and wants behind,
Forget the troubles beyond."*



Midwife to the rocks,

Drawing by Natalie Birrell

The Legend of the

English Grass Cave

In the mountain ranges which hem in each side of the Westfield Valley, may be found many caves, some of them so large as to comprise one or two rooms, others just holes in the rocks that hardly can be classified as caves at all. On the Tekoa range in the town of Montgomery is a cave known as English Grass Cave, reeking with legend, which is the largest natural cave in the valley.

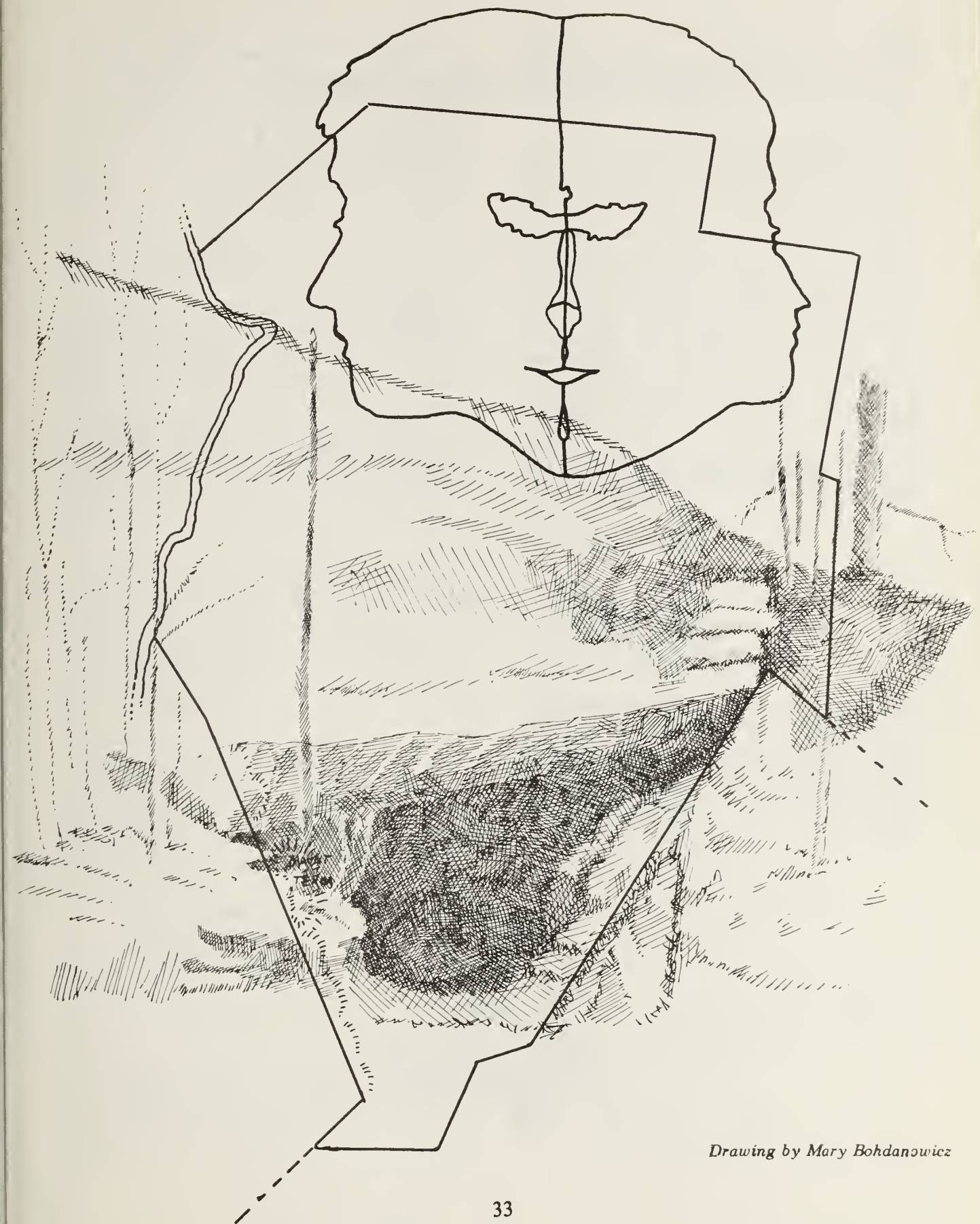
Until some years ago the approach to this cave could be found without difficulty, but now the path leading to it is grown up with brush and its exact location is known only to a few. Its entrance is by way of a narrow passage leading to the first chamber of the main cave. This room is of good size, about twelve feet square, and by climbing up six or eight feet, access is gained to another chamber of smaller dimensions.

Valley legends are to the effect that this cave was the hiding place of one or two men who played a prominent part in the history of England at the time of Oliver Cromwell. After the execution of Charles the First, Cromwell was placed on the throne as the titular head of the government until the country's affairs reached a more stable condition. After his death, his son carried on for a time, but conditions still did not improve, so

Parliament called for a king again, and Charles II, son of Charles I, came to the throne of England in 1660.

Charles II evidently kept in mind the manner in which his father had been put to death. This activity on his part caused the disappearance of quite a few prominent members of Parliament, and a few others fled from England, coming to America. This is where the English Grass Cave is supposed to have played a part in history.

Goffe, Whalley, and Dixwell are the men who supposedly hid in the cave for many months. Landing in Boston, they hoped to escape the wrath of Charles II, but in this country there were many people who were in sympathy with the king and were ready to report the whereabouts of these men. This meant a constant shifting of location, travelling mostly at night, avoiding the towns along the way. Gradually they worked their way inland from more thickly settled sections along the coast, and after many months of wandering sought refuge in the Westfield Valley. When Hampshire County was created in 1662, there were about 1500 white settlers in this section. Springfield, Westfield, Longmeadow -- all were well started on their way to becoming townships. Farther up the



valley were the plantations, Hatfield, Hadley, Northampton, and Greenfield; and throughout this period these little settlements were having their trouble with the Indians.

King Philip and his murderous warriors were striking here and there, and it was while he was making an attack on Hadley and seemed about to overpower the small garrison, that a stranger appeared and took command and through his encouragement and effort, the soldiers drove off the Indians and saved the settlement. This stranger was Goffe, one of the men who condemned Charles I to death and who fled to America to live in exile.

Whalley was Goffe's father-in-law, and together they roamed from settlement to

settlement, ever on the lookout for agents of Charles II. For twelve years, history tells us, they lived as members of a family of a Mr. Russell who was minister of a church in Hadley. Dixwell, who was the third member of the party to escape from England, eventually found his way to what is now New Haven. Today on what is known as the Green of that city, one may find a monument erected to his memory.

Handed down from generation to generation in this section, with history lending an authentic note, the story is in effect that Goffe, Whalley, and Dixwell spent almost a year in hiding in this cave in Montgomery, and because of this it derived its present name of "English Grass Cave."

From the notes of the Montgomery Historical Society

Note: Doris Wackerbarth of Granville has written an interesting and complete account of the judges and their lives in Hadley and the Connecticut Valley. "*The Guardians*" published 1980. She feels it very unlikely this cave was used as the legend suggests in the late 1660s. This area was complete wilderness then. It is an interesting theory. Ed.



Genealogical Queries

Joseph Webb, born 1701, Rev. War Veteran, married 3 Feb. 1736 Elizabeth Starr, prob. a widow; lived in Wethersfield, Conn. Who were parents and/or first husband of Elizabeth?

Would like to corr. with desc. of Jonathan and Sarah Giddings Gardner; he was born in Worthington in 1824 and died 1858, his grandson poss. migrated to Hiawatha, Kansas about 1900.

Are there desc. of William Perkins and Eunice N. Gardner Miller who were married in Huntington in 1847? Eunice G. Miller died 1851 and William P. Miller then married Mary Reid. They lived in Knightville.

Jacob Simcock, a Quaker from Ridley, Pennsylvania, married Alice De Maris of Springfield, Mass. in early 1700's. Any information on the De Maris line would be appreciated.

Mrs. Richard W. Gardner
590 Sunset Drive
Hendersonville, N.C. 28739

* * * * *

I am seeking information on Joseph and Lydia (Winn) Prentice who left Worthington, Mass. and moved to near by Huntington in the late 1700's or early 1800's.

Donald H. Prentice
155 Haywood Knolls Drive
Hendersonville, N.C. 28739

* * * * *

Am seeking to corr. with desc. of George Orcott who married Clarisa Frisbie of Blandford. They had daughter Ellen Clarisa born around 1842 in Blandford, she later married Reuben Daniels on Nov. 27, 1862 in Middlefield. They lived the rest of their lives in Becket, Mass.

Would like to corr. with anyone who might be related to a Peter Atwood, who lived in Chester or Huntington in early 1800's. He had daughter born 1815 in Chester. Her name was Sophia, and she married Joel Daniels of Becket. Would like to know last name of her mother. First name was Phebe. Also were there other children born to Peter and Phebe?

Grace Wheeler
430 Worthington Rd.
Huntington, Mass. 01050

Would like information on Mary or May Church who married Willis J. Wheeler of Becket, Mass. Believe she may have been related to Church's and Noble's of Granville, Mass.

Mrs. Carol Wheeler
20 Debra Street
Lee, Mass. 01238

Our Readers Write Us...

Blandford, Mass.
December 5, 1982

Dear Louise,

Ever since receiving the fall issue of *STONE WALLS*, I have planned on writing you about the Mountain House article and its accompanying picture. Instead, I was busy banking the house against the coming winter and storing seven cords of wood.

I was talking to Barbara McCorkindale the other night so by now you must have heard what was wrong.

However I will explain in this letter as well. The MOUNTAIN VIEW hotel was on North Street next to the Blandford Country Club. It, too, burned about 1963-5. The MOUNTAIN HOUSE was located near the blinker light in the center, on Main St. - where the Montovanis live now. The accompanying note was correct.

I have a newspaper picture of the Mountain House but it would not be suitable to reproduce. But in Mr. Wood's "*Taverns and Turnpikes*", the opposite page 52, you will find an earlier picture of the building.

If *STONE WALLS* makes a correction of the error and uses the "*Taverns and Turnpikes*" illustration, the explanation beneath should be omitted. Mr. Wood somehow put in Russell Sage by mistake. The explanation should be changed to "*The New Hotel of Orrin Sage - 1830*".

He was a very prominent business man in Blandford for many years and erected the house in that year. In fact, there is a town record on the books commending him for doing so.

Perhaps the board will wish to make this correction in the next issue.

Sincerely,

Doris Hayden

Dear *Stone Walls* folks:

Just a small footnote to the story "Glendale Farm. Middlefield." According to our family history, my great, great grandfather, James Nooney, settled on land around Glendale Falls in 1782 and is said to be the first recorded owner of that land.

There is reason to believe, though this has not been definitely established, that he and his brother-in-law, Elijah Churchill, (see *Stone Walls* issue Vol. 2 No. 2) were granted their land by the state as a sort of bonus for their service in the Revolutionary War in accordance with then existing practice. It is thought that James Nooney lived there until his death in 1829.

F. S. Nooney

.....I enjoy the magazine so much and I know so many of the people and places written about. I am a Birnie-Cottrell and part of the infamous CCO's of Middlefield (Cooks, Cottrells, Olds). It's about the only contact I have of the area now. Beautiful book--keep up the good work!

Joan Kelly
Largo, Florida

.....Thank you for printing my story *A Spring Dip*. I love the illustration. K. Cook seems to know the area well and has caught the spirit of the event. It brought back a flood of memories. (No pun intended!)

Yours truly,

Jean Cooper
Northampton, Ma.

THE MESSAGE OF THE MAPLES

*Silent, stron and gamely gaunt
When winter winds sweep through,
The maples tall that line the lane
Stand still against the blue.
A sweetness seeps from waking trees
And life flows forth anew,
Cold crystal changed by chastening fires
Now glows with amber hue.*

*These signs proclaim the message
Of spring, and faith renew.
These trees confirm the promise
Of life, so sure so true.*

by Marion Sweeney



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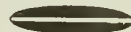
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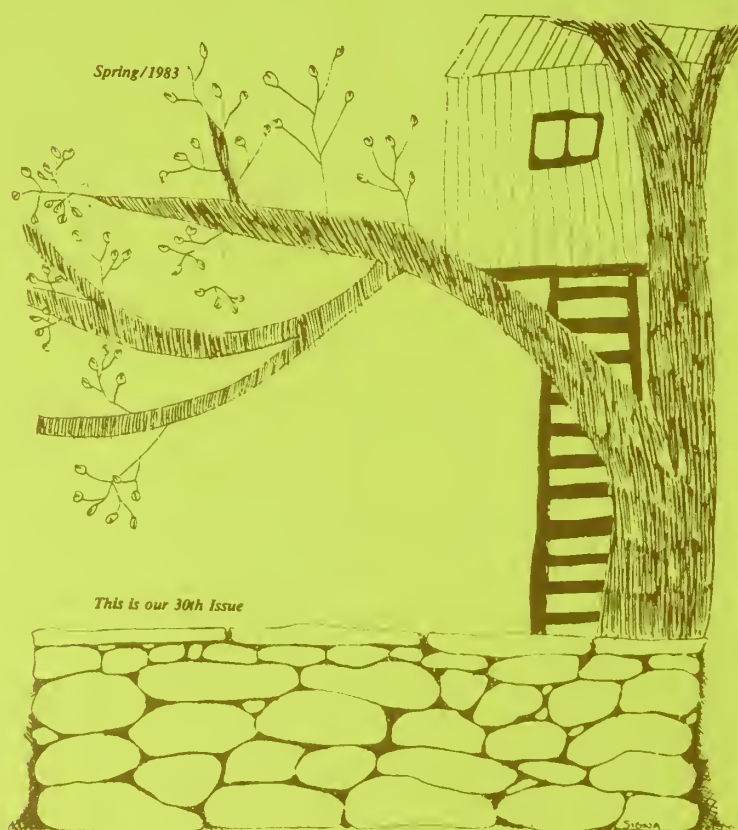
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"Pile each stone in your drawing as the farmer did, beginning with the largest boulders on the bottom. Then make sure each new layer of stones is placed firmly and will support the next. Your drawing will be as solid as the enduring wall itself."

Instruction for sketching a stone wall from *Drawing From Nature* by Jim Arnosky. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York, 1892

STONE WALLS



Spring/1983

This is our 30th Issue